The Biſhop of *Glouceſter's*

SERMON

Preached before the

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners.

June 26. 1699.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the Church of

St. *MARY le Bow*,

TO THE

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners.

June 26. 1699.

By *EDWARD* Lord Biſhop of *Glouceſter*.

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Epheſ. vi. 7, 8.

With good Will doing Service, as to the LORD, *and not unto Men: Knowing that whatſoever good thing any man doth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord; whether he be Bond or Free.*

THE Deſign of theſe Quarterly Sermons being to Encourage thoſe Worthy Perſons, who are Entred into *Societies for Reformation of Manners*, to perſevere and abound more and more, in the Extraordinary good Work they are Engaged in; as alſo to Excite others, in their reſpective Stations, to follow their Example: And it being moreover very Seaſonable, to Diſcourſe at this time of

the *Principle*, by which we ought to be acted in *all our* Services; and eſpecially in a Service of *this* high Nature, I thought I could not make Choice of a more proper Subject for *this* Occaſion, than the Words now read.

I. We meet with in them a great *Duty: With good will doing Service; as to the Lord, and not unto Men.*

II. A moſt Perſwaſive *Motive* thereto: *Knowing that whatſoever good thing any Man doth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord*, &c.

I. As to the *Duty.* We find an Injunction of the ſame, *Col.* 3. 23. *Whatſoever you do, do it heartily; as to the Lord, and not unto Men.*

With good Will, μετ' ευνοιας; ἐκ ψυχῆς, as 'tis in the foregoing words, *from the Soul*, i. e. moſt freely and chearfully.

Doing

Doing Service, or any Service you do, whether Sacred or Civil. *Whatſoever you do*, as 'tis in the parallel Text. And theſe Words do immediately relate to Services of a mere Civil Nature, becauſe they are in *both* places directed to Servants of *Men*, for their Inſtruction in reference to *their* mean Services *particularly*. But if even *theſe* are to be done *as to the Lord*, much more ſhould far higher Services; and moſt of all thoſe which immediately relate to Almighty God.

As to the Lord, and not unto Men; or, not *as* to Men. *i. e.* Having a greater Regard to the Lord than to Men. This is an *Hebreiſm*, which expreſſeth what is not to be done, but in a certain limited Sence, as if it were not to be done at all: Of which Forms of Speech there are in Scripture abundance of Inſtances. I will name but one, *viz.* thoſe Words of our Saviour, *Labour not for the*

Meat which periſheth, but for that Meat which endureth to Eternal Life.

And not unto Men, i. e. for the pleaſing of them, and obtaining from them a Reward for your Service.

We will, in diſcourſing on theſe Words, ſhew

I. What is Implyed in *thus* doing our Services.

II. Under what Obligations we are thus to do them.

I ſhall defer ſpeaking to the *Motive*, to the *Application.*

I. What is Implyed in this *doing our Services as to the Lord*, &c.

Theſe *three* things are herein implyed, Having a reſpect to God's Command: And to his Glory: And to *both* Chiefly and Principally.

I. Ha-

1. Having in our Services a Reſpect to God's Command. To His Command either particularly or in general, expreſly or by evident Conſequence, requiring them. And therefore in the two Verſes before the Text, Servants are enjoyned to perform their Services *in Singleneſs*, or Simplicity and Sincerity, *of Heart, as unto Chriſt. Not with Eye-ſervice as Men Pleaſers, but as the Servants of Chriſt, doing the Will of God from the Heart.* Which is expreſt in the Verſe before the *other* Text by *fearing God*, -- *in Singleneſs of Heart, fearing* (or *as* fearing) God. Whatſoever Service we are employed in without any Conſideration of the Divine Law, we are not therein obedient to God: Obedience to Him being not a mere doing *what* He requires, but doing it *becauſe* He requires it; under the *Notion* of its being required by Him.

2. Herein is implyed doing our Services, with Reſpect alſo to the Glory

Glory of God. To have Reſpect to God's Command, and to His Glory, are different things; ſo different, that the one may be without the other. As when a Man obeys God from a ſlaviſh Dread of Him, as the poor *Americans* worſhip the Devil. Or when Obedience to the Divine Majeſty proceeds from no higher a Motive, than hopes to obtain thereby *temporal* Bleſſings, or a ſenſual Happineſs in the other World; ſuch a Sort of Heaven as is the *Turkiſh* Paradiſe. But that our Services ought to have Regard to God's Glory, as well as to His Command, muſt neceſſarily be implyed in the Text, in that our Apoſtle *expreſſeth* it in that Injunction of his, *Whether you eat or drink, or whatſoever you do, do all to the Glory of God.* Or, make all your Actions ſubſervient, as far as they are capable of being ſo, to the Honouring of God.

The *Glory of God*, which we ſo often

ten read of in the H. Scriptures, is the displaying of some or other of His Glorious Perfections; or the making Reasonable Beings to feel or observe them in their Effects. And *We* are said to Glorifie Him, when we are His Instruments herein; and when his Moral Perfections do shine in our selves; which are those alone wherein we are inabled to imitate Him, and which are called His *Image*. These are His *Loving Kindness*, *Righteousness* and *Holiness*; and may be all comprised in this one Word *Goodness*. To do good consequently from the Love of Goodness, is an Instance of designing God's Glory in the good we do; as also to do good with a Design to be *like* to God, and by this means to be qualified for the Enjoyment of Him.

God glorifieth Himself by Exerting His Goodness, or His Power and Wisdom in doing good, from the *Delight* he takes therein. *I am the Lord*,

Lord, which Exerciſeth Loving-kindneſs, Judgement and Righteouſneſs in the Earth; for, or becauſe, *in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord.* Jer. 9. 24. *Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and paſſeth by the Tranſgreſſion of the Remnant of His Heritage! He retaineth not His Anger for ever, becauſe He* Delighteth in *Mercy,* Mic. 7. 18. *Thou art good,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *and doſt good;* or, therefore thou *doſt* good, becauſe Thou *art* good; and what is God's *being* good, but His *delighting* in Goodneſs? Loving-kindneſs & Righteouſneſs are too Excellent things, to be Exerciſed as a mere means to a farther End; for theſe are the very *beſt* things (as *Tully* diſcourſeth admirably in his Book *de Naturâ Deorum*) and as they are in *God* they are the Divine Nature it ſelf, not as qualities in their Subject. It may be ſaid, that the ſame may be affirmed of the Divine Power and Wiſdom: That's certain, but *theſe* Perfections do concur

concur to the Conſtituting of the Divine Nature, as they are neceſſarily determined to the Serving of the Ends of Loving kindneſs and Righteouſneſs; as it is eaſie to demonſtrate. And in ſaying, that God Glorifieth Himſelf in Exerting His Perfections in doing good, from the Delight he takes therein, I ſay alſo, that *We* do glorifie *Him* in herein reſembling Him.

So that, in ſhort, to have Reſpect to God's Glory in our Services, is the ſame thing with being acted from a Principle of Love to God and Goodneſs. Of Love to God, not conſidered meerly as good to *us* or *ours*, but chiefly as infinitely good in Himſelf, & as unſpeakable good to His whole Creation. And he who loves Goodneſs as *ſuch*, with what is implyed therein, will *ſo* as we now ſaid love God; as he who ſo loves God, will neceſſarily love Goodneſs *as* Goodneſs.

3. To

3. To have Regard to the Command and the Glory of God, *chiefly and principally*, muſt needs alſo be implyed in doing Service *as to the Lord*. This rather is expreſſed, in that it is ſaid *as to the Lord and not unto Men*, or *more* to the Lord than to Men. But *indeed* it is too little a thing to ſay, that in all our Services we are obliged to a *merely greater* Regard to God than to Men; or than to the Serving of any ſelfiſh worldly Intereſt; for nothing is more undoubted (as will be ſhewn preſently) than that the Serving and Glorifying of God muſt be *ſo* the Principal, as to be the Ultimate End of all our Services: Such an End, as that whatſoever *other* Ends we propoſe to our ſelves in them, ſhould be intended to be ſubſervient thereunto; ſhould be deſigned as Means to the promoting thereof. For inſtance, our Bleſſed Saviour ſaith, *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works*; or let the immediate

ate End of your doing good Works *publickly* be, that Men may take Notice of them: But in what follows, he ſaith, that their being taken Notice of ſhould be wholly deſigned as means to the Glorifying of God, *and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* Not to the having the Praiſe of Men, but to glorifie God, by doing Credit to your Religion, and ſo bringing the Obſervers of your good Works, to the embracing thereof, and to the following of your Example; whereby *they* will bring Glory to God too.

Nay, the Praiſe of Men, or a *good Name*, may very lawfully be deſigned in doing good Works; but *then* it is a *bad* End, a very bad one, when our Motive thereto is the gratifying of fond Imagination, and an Ambitious Humour (for which our Saviour ſo condemned the *Phariſees*) and not from a Deſire to be enabled to do the more *good* in the World, by the

the means of our good Name, or the more to Glorifie God. I proceed to ſhew,

II. Under what *Obligations* we are thus to perform our Services *as to the Lord.* I ſhall ſpeak to *three*, and they are the greateſt imaginable.

1. We are obliged hereunto, in that all we *have*, or *are*, is from God. All the Faculties, Abilities and Powers, both bodily and ſpiritual, whereby we are fitted for any Service; all the Means, Opportunities & Advatages we have for the doing of good; nay, our very Willingneſs to improve them for that purpoſe: Theſe are all from God. What a devout Acknowledgment doth K. *David* make of this! 1 *Chron.* 29. 14. *But who am I, and what is my People, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.* And once more, All the good Succeſs

of

of our Endeavours is from God too. *O Lord* (ſaith the Prophet) *I know that the way of Man, is not in himſelf; it is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps.* It is not in *Man*, either to do what is moſt eligible, for the bringing about this or that good Deſign; nor, when he is directed to the *beſt* and *fitteſt* Means, to bring his Affairs to a good Iſſue. *Paul* can but *Plant*, *Apollos* but *Water*; it is God alone *that giveth the Increaſe.*

Now, who is not able, at firſt ſight, to perceive the mighty Force of the Obligation which ariſeth from *hence*, to do all his Services *as to the Lord?* Are we our Selves, all our Powers, all our Opportunities for the Doing of them, from God? *Are we not ſufficient of our ſelves, ſo much as to think any thing as of our ſelves* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *but our Sufficiency is of God?* Is our very Willingneſs to endeavour owing to the Grace (tho'

not the *irreſiſtible* Grace) of God; and is all our Succeſs from his Bleſſing; and can any thing *then* be more evident, than that we are bound to have principally, and ultimately, an Eye to Him in them?

There is no *Firſt Principle* more apparent, than that the Glory of Him who is our *Firſt Cauſe*, and who is All in All to us, ought to be our *laſt End. Of Him and through Him, and to Him are all things: To whom be Glory for ever and ever, Amen.* Rom. 11. ult. Or, therefore to Him be given Glory by the whole Univerſe *for ever and ever.* There is ſo inſeparable a Connexion between that Premiſe and this Inference, that they can not be parted by the Divine Power it ſelf. Eſpecially ſince,

2. We are *farther* obliged hereunto, in that God made us and all things belonging to us, for the glorifying of Himſelf; the exerting and diſ-

diſplaying of His glorious Perfections. This Conſideration doth very much heighten our Obligation to do all our Services *as to the Lord.* Had He only made us, and placed us in the Circumſtances in which we are; and then left it free to us (which 'tis impoſſible he ſhould) whether we would ſerve Him, or *not* ſerve Him, with our Souls and Bodies, His own Gifts and Bleſſings, we ſhould notwithſtanding be eternally Obliged hereto by the Law of *Gratitude*: But when He hath given us our Being, and all we enjoy, that we *may* glorifie Him, we contradict the Deſign of our Great Creator and Benefactor in making us what we are, and doing as He hath done for us. I need not tell thoſe who are acquainted with the Divine Oracles, that there had been no ſuch Creatures as our ſelves, but for *this* End. But were this never revealed, we are aſſured of nothing more from *natural Light*, than that it muſt neceſſarily

be ſo. For He who is infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, can not but have the *beſt* of Deſigns in all His Actings; but what Deſign can be Comparable to *this*, of making His Creatures to obſerve and feel, how Glorious He is in His Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs; and thoſe of them to be His Inſtruments in ſetting forth the Glory of theſe, which he hath made capable of being ſo?

If it be Objected, that the *Brutes* and *inanimate* Creatures are made to Glorifie God, as well as *Men and Angels*; and therefore *Deſigning* His Glory is not neceſſarily implyed in Glorifying Him: I anſwer, that God aims at His own Glory, in a far higher and more excellent Manner, in rational Agents, than in Creatures void of Reaſon. That is, He hath made thoſe ſo to Glorifie Him, as to *Intend* and *Deſign* the Glorifying of Him. And farther, we can not conceive, how Brutes, and inſenſible

Crea-

Creatures, can be ſaid otherwaies to Glorifie their Maker, than as they give occaſion to Reaſonable ones ſo to do. *Origen*, indeed, was of Opinion, that becauſe the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars* are called upon by the Pſalmiſt *to praiſe the Lord*, *they* are endued with Reaſon as well as our ſelves: But he might for the ſelf-ſame reaſon as well have aſſerted, that *Cattle*, and *Fowls*, and *all creeping* things; nay, *Mountains* and *Hills*, *Fire* and *Hail*, *Snow* and *Vapours*, and *all God's Works*, are reaſonable Creatures too; *theſe* alſo, and that in the *ſame* Pſalm, being called upon to *praiſe Him*. But *Plato* was, in this matter, a better Divine than that holy Father; for having ſtiled the World *God's Temple*, *wherein all His Creatures do joyn together in the Worſhiping of Him*, he calls *Mankind His Prieſts*, *by whom the Worſhip of the Univerſe is Performed*.

3. Our Obligation to the Duty in

the Text, is alſo founded upon our own *Intereſt*; our infinitely greateſt Intereſt. And therefore, as it appears from the two *former* Conſiderations, that it is the moſt *diſingenuous* and the moſt *unjuſt* thing, not to make the Glory of God the chief and ultimate End of all our Services; ſo *this* Conſideration ſpeaks it to be the moſt *unkind* thing to our ſelves: Since it is only *our good* God aims at, in deſiring to be Glorified by us: For *none* can accrue to himſelf from any thing *without* Him, nor the ſmalleſt drop added to His *Fountain-Fulneſs*. If there *could*, He could not be *God*; that is, a Being of Abſolute, Infinite Perfection.

The Apoſtate Emperour was much diſguſted at the *Second* Commandment, and would have had it ſtruck out of the Decalogue (as the *Romiſh* Church, for a reaſon too well known, hath left it out of her daily Offices) becauſe God in that Commandment ex-

expreſſeth ſo great Jealouſy for His own Honour; which he would have to be very unworthy of the Divine Majeſty: But St. *Cyril* well anſwered him, That it is by no means ſo, *Becauſe Man's greateſt Happineſs conſiſteth in the due Apprehenſion of God, and giving Glory to Him.*

God, I ſay, is not more Glorious in Himſelf, by means of the Glory His Creatures give Him, but all the Gain thereof is their *own*; they by this means becoming *like* to Him, and therefore qualified for everlaſting Communion with Him.

I will farther obſerve to you ſuitably to the two former Conſiderations, That God Almighty muſt needs alſo expect our deſigning His Glory in all our Services, as it is a *neceſſary Act of Righteouſneſs*, it being (as has been ſhewed) moſt highly reaſonable, fit and juſt, that we ſhould have ſuch a Senſe of His infinite

Goodneſs, as *thus* to do, He cannot but look for it for this reaſon from us, and oblige us thereto. So that, as God exerciſeth Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs becauſe He delights therein, ſo will He have *us* to exerciſe the ſame, becauſe He *delights* in our ſo doing. Not (as we ſaid) in regard of any *Advantage* that He can reap thereby, but becauſe the Exerciſe of Goodneſs & Righteouſneſs whereſoever it is, is as *ſuch* moſt highly pleaſing to Him; and the *contrary* thereto, as abhorrent toHis Holy Nature.

And now, to make *Application* of what hath been diſcourſed, To *You*, my Brethren, who are Members of of our Societies *for Reformation of Manners:* The Service in which you have engaged your ſelves, is incomparably the moſt Noble, the moſt highly Praiſe-worthy, that it could be *poſſible* for you to be employed in. So it is, as the moſt Publick and General

neral Good is the Deſign of it; not the Good of ſome particular Perſons, or Bodies of Men, or onely of this Great City, but of our whole Nation: In ſeveral Parts of which a good Progreſs is made therein. Nor is this Deſign confined within our own Country, but it hath taken in that of *Ireland* too; where (thanks be to God) it hath had as good Succeſs, as could reaſonably have ſo ſoon been hoped for. And to *what* People may not the Influence thereof reach, ſooner or later, according as it proſpers where it is undertaken? And the ſetting it on foot hitherto is, under God, wholly owing in every Place to *your* worthy Example, Gentlemen, and to the Directions they have received from Some of you.

And as this is a Service of the moſt *Publick Nature*, ſo is it of the greateſt *Concernment* imaginable to the Publick; as highly conducing to both the Temporal and Spiritual Intereſt

tereſt thereof. He knows not what this Phraſe *Spiritual Intereſt* ſignifies, who can queſtion, whether *a Reformation of Manners* be abſolutely neceſſary thereunto. And he muſt be ſunk below *Paganiſm*, who can doubt of its being neceſſary alſo to the *Temporal* Welfare, both of particular Perſons, and of Nations as Nations. Even that Atheiſt *Epicurus* (as *Tully* has demonſtrated him to have been, as much better Thoughts as many *ſince* have had of him) as he forbad *Adultery* to his Diſciples, in regard of the great Miſchiefs which he ſaw attended that Vice; ſo he condemned the indulging of *any* unreaſonable and vicious Appetite, as inconſiſtent with all Tranquillity of Mind, and Self-Enjoyment. And as to *Nations*, the wiſe King *Solomon* hath obſerved, that *Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach to any People.* And 'tis eaſy to ſhew, that there is no one Maxim wherein the wiſeſt of *Pagans* are more

more agreed. That excellent *Tully* hath this very remarkable Saying, *Omnia Proſpera eveniunt colentibus Deos, ſed Adverſa ſpernentibus.* *All things happen well to thoſe People, who have a Care of Religion; but as ill to the Contemners thereof.* And thoſe who are acquainted with Divine Revelation, and ſuch as have only Natural Light, together with Experience and Obſervation, for their Inſtruction, are very unanimous in declaring the Toleration of Vice to be the moſt pernicious thing to Bodies Politique, both in regard of its Natural Conſequents, and the Provocation it gives to the Divine Majeſty ſeverely to viſit for it. Surely therefore thoſe among *our ſelves*, who have no Senſe of the fatal Conſequence of a general Corruption of Manners, upon *both* thoſe Accounts, muſt either have little more of *Men* than the Figure and Shape; or (which is infinitely worſe) *be given over to a Reprobate Mind.*

Now

Now, notwithſtanding God Almighty has conſtituted one Order of Men, whoſe whole Buſineſs it is, to turn Sinners (with the Aſſiſtance of His Grace) to Righteouſneſs; and to Advance Piety and Virtue in the World, by inlightning Men in the Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion; by inſtructing them in the Divine Laws, and exciting them to the Obſervance of them, by the Glorious Promiſes, and Terrible Threats annexed to them; and by the Exerciſe of Spiritual Diſcipline: Yet ſuch is the Depravation of Humane Nature, that He ſaw it moreover neceſſary, to ordain Civil Magiſtrates *for the Puniſhment of Evil-Doers*, (as St. *Peter* ſpeaks) *and for the Praiſe*, or Incouragement, *of thoſe that do well. For the Puniſhment of Evil-Doers*, by inforcing their Creators Laws, with Laws of their own Enacting, with the Sanction of Corporal and Pecuniary Penalties; and the due inflicting of them on thoſe who

who are too much hardned in their wicked Practices, to be reformed by the Menaces of Puniſhment in another Life; and by Spiritual Methods.

And it being the Buſineſs of the foreſaid Societies, to do their utmoſt to *Awaken* the good Laws of our Land againſt Prophaneneſs and Immorality, which have for the moſt part a long time lain a ſleep, and ſerved to little better purpoſe, than the reproaching of thoſe (too generally ſpeaking) who have been intruſted with the Execution of them: What more worthy Enterprize, or of greater, or ſo great Importance, could enter into the hearts of you, my Worthy Brethren, who have entered into theſe Societies, to undertake! And the method you have pitched upon for the carrying on of this Bleſſed Work, is ſo excellently well contrived, that it hath ſucceeded, by the Bleſſing of God, to Admiration,

in

in and about this City. This hath been a great Age for Projects; but this of *Tours* (tho' I undervalue it in ſo calling it) doth infinitely excell them all; as very beneficial as ſome of them are found to be.

It muſt be Acknowledged, that no Man is the more Religious for abſtaining from the Practice of any Vice, merely for fear of *temporal* Penalties: Yet thoſe on whom this fear works an outward Reformation, are in a much more hopeful way to a thorow Converſion from *Religious* Motives, than the more *hardy* Sinners. Beſides, by the vigorous Execution of the Laws, wicked wretches are reſtrained from doing open diſhonour to Almighty God; that diſhonour to his Authority, which may well be called *National*, when Connived at, and as *ſuch* deſervedly puniſhed: And, by this means they are forced to give over offending *Scandalouſly*, and debauching

bauching others by their infectious Example, and inſnaring Practices. Whereupon will neceſſarily follow, that our Youth for the future, will be nothing ſo liable to be corrupted; and a happy ſtop will be put to that propagation of Vice, which for ſo many Years hath been greatly encreaſing.

And as nothing is more evident, than that this your Undertaking is the moſt excellent one conſidered in it ſelf; ſo we ought not in the leaſt to doubt but that it is likewiſe ſo, with reſpect to the *Principle* by which you are acted. For what Motive can you have thereto, beſides the Love of God and Goodneſs, and an earneſt deſire to promote both the Temporal and Eternal Wellfare of your Fellow Citizens and Country-Men; together with the hope of being qualified thereby for greater degrees of that Happineſs which our Bleſſed Lord has promiſed to his

his faithful Servants, and chiefly conſiſteth in Likeneſs to GOD, and the Eternal Enjoyment of him? Which hope muſt as much proceed from Love to God, as to your ſelves.

Can you deſign any *Secular* Advantage, by being thus employed? *Expenſe* it brings upon you; but can it make you a Recompence for it, and for all your pains, by bringing in what the World calls *Profit*? I muſt be an idle Man, if I ſeriouſly asked you theſe Queſtions. There is a Reward from *Men*, which you could not but expect, when you entred into this Service; and you have accordingly *found* it: But I verily believe this was no *Motive* to you. I mean, the Reward of hard Cenſures, as a Company of Buſy-bodies, and Medlers in Matters that don't concern you; tho' if they concern not *you*, they can concern no body. But, indeed, nothing is more evident, than that every Man with-

without Exception, is obliged to Concern himſelf in this great Work, ſuitably to the Circumſtances in which Providence hath placed him. And none can accuſe thoſe of you who are not Magiſtrates, as Seizing upon *their* Office. The beſt of it is, you cannot be Cenſured, as *Exerciſing your ſelves in things too high for you* (tho' you do in *great Matters*) this your *Succeſs* demonſtrates.

Brow-beatings alſo from too many, who ought to have given you the greateſt Encouragement, is a Reward which I ſuppoſe did not neither come unlookt for; nor yet that of *Vexatious Proſecutions*; nor that of running imminent dangers from Lewd Mobs: Neither *theſe*, nor *worſe* things can ſurprize thoſe, who are bent upon doing their utmoſt towards the Overthrowing of the Devils Kingdom; who expreſs the greateſt Emnity to the darling Luſts of his Children, and to the Ungod-

ly *Trades* of a great number of them.

And, whether you *Expected* them or no, you cannot be ignorant what Reflections upon your proceedings, many *Sober* People have been too forward to make; and ſome who have the Repute (and very juſtly I doubt not) of *truly Religious* People too; thro' their raſh Credulity, and lending too favourable an Ear to idle Tales; and from jealouſies of what Conſequence ſuch *Combinations* may in time prove to be to our Conſtitution in Church and State. On which Topick I never yet heard one wiſe word; and do perſwade my ſelf I never *ſhall*. And ſince Experience aſſures us of nothing more, than that no great Undertaking can be managed with any conſiderable Advantage, otherwiſe than by *Societies*; and therefore in all Profeſſions they are found to be neceſſary: It is very wonderful to *me*, that the leaſt danger to *either* of theſe Con-

Conſtitutions can be ſuſpected from *ſuch* Societies, as are formed wholly for the promoting of the *grand Deſign of both*; as I need not ſay the *Reformation and Regulation of Manners* is. But it will be well for thoſe Regular Perſons, who are ſo forward to find fault with *theſe* Societies, if there be nothing of *Envy* at the bottom, ariſing from their Conſciouſneſs of being much out-done by them, in Concern for the Publick Weal, in Activity in doing good, and in Zeal for the Honour of Almighty God. And, mentioning their *Zeal*, I cannot but obſerve, that were it not as Prudent as Pious, their Adverſaries would never have been baffled in Courts of Judicature, as they have been.

And as, my Brethren, you might reaſonably have made account of far *worſe* requitals for your Pains, than any of you have found hitherto, through the ſpecial protection of the

Divine Providence, and yet you *would* run the Venture; ſo have I not heard, that the furious Rage which ſome have met with, for giving informations againſt Impious and Profligate People, hath in the leaſt diſcouraged any of them. And by the way, none but ſuch as are either wicked, or very ſilly, can look upon *this* as a baſe Employment; as infamous as the Trade of Informing was againſt *another* ſort of Men, we know when. For ſince Crimes muſt *ever* go unpuniſhed, if there be no Informations; and therefore no care can be taken, either of the Honour of God, or the Honour of the Government, and the Welfare of the Publick, or of the Souls of Obdurate Sinners; *this* cannot be a more neceſſary than *Honourable* Service.

But to return to what I was now ſaying, the principle of this your Zeal may not, without great Uncharita-

ritableneſs, nor apparent Injuſtice, be called in queſtion: Since, conſidering what has been ſaid, you muſt be the *Weakeſt* Men in the World, if you do not this Service, *as to the Lord, and not as to Men:* Conſidering likewiſe, how not only *Atheiſm* and *Deiſm*, *ſpeculative Prophaneneſs*, and *Contempt of Religion*, but alſo a *Gallio like* indifferency in ſuch as retain the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, have gotten ground among us; and how much the very *form of Godlineſs* is grown out of fashion among ſuch as may not be accuſed of being irreligious in their Principles. So that there can be very little Temptation *now*, what ſo ever was *heretofore*, to the vice of Hipocriſy: It being become alſo very Modiſh, to give jerks at *all* Zeal as a fanatical, enthuſiaſtical, and hot-brain'd thing. As indeed Zeal *is*, when *it is not according to Knowledge*; and the World hath had lamentable Experience, and particularly *our* Church and State,

of the horrible Miſchievouſneſs of ſuch a Zeal. But this is a Superſtitious, it may by no means be called a Religious Zeal.

But doth not St. *Paul* ſay, *It is good to be always zealouſly affected in a good thing?* And it is the *Beſt* of things, in the Opinion of all but the *worſt* of Men, in which theſe Societies are zealouſly affected. To be inſpired with a Zeal in things of this weighty Importance, which is well Principled and well Governed, is the moſt Bleſſed Thing we can pray for. The more we have of it, the more ſhall we be *filled with all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, unto the Praiſe and Glory of God.* The more *like* ſhall we be to our Bleſſed Saviour, whoſe Zeal for His Father's Glory, and the Salvation of Men, and their *bodily* Welfare too, did put Him upon *always going up and down doing good.* And I need not ſtand to ſhew, that the great-

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eſt Bleſſings that ever have accrued to the Church of God, by the Miniſtry of Men, have been the Effects of a warm Zeal: Nor was ever GOD much glorified, nor the publick well ſerved without it; let our Fleerers at Zeal think what they pleaſe. And therefore to be called *Zealots* in ſuch a Cauſe as you, my Brethren, have eſpouſed, is ſo far from a Diſparagement, that it is a Name to be *glorified in.*

So that I once more ſay, Your doing this Service *as to the Lord, and not as to Men,* may not be in the leaſt doubted of; and the *leſs* may it, for what was now ſadly obſerved, *viz.* That the prevailing Humour of the preſent Age, is ſuch, as gives as little Temptation as can be, to affect Popularity by Undertakings of this Nature.

And having reflected upon the

deplorable Degeneracy of the Age, I can not forbear profeſſing to you, That the greateſt Hope I have, that God hath ſtill Mercy in ſtore for us, notwithſtanding the intolerable Returns we have made to as mighty Obligations, as he hath ever laid upon any People, is, from the excellent Spirit with which He hath of late indued ſo great a number of good Chriſtians among us, for the running down of Wickedneſs, by the moſt juſtifiable Means, in their reſpective Stations: And from His *Majeſty's* having given them ſo great Encouragement, by his late Proclamation, *For the more effectual Suppreſſing of Immorality and Prophaneneſs*; and his recommending this great Work, again and again, to the ſpecial Care of the Houſes of Parliament.

And I pray God, they may comply with the King's Deſire the next Seſſion; by preparing for the Roy-

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al Aſſent as effectual a Bill or Bills, againſt the other Reigning Vices of the Age, as is the late *Act againſt Prophane Swearing and Curſing*. And who were the Contrivers, and chief Promoters of *this* Act, ſome Gentlemen of the chief of theſe Societies do beſt know.

But I muſt not forget to take notice of *Another* moſt Pious and Charitable Deſign, which hath for ſome time been carrying on with very great Induſtry, by theſe Societies, *viz.* The Setting up of *Free Schools* in the great Pariſhes within and without this City; for the Teaching of poor Children to *Read* and *Write*, and *caſt Account*, to enable them for honeſt Callings; and eſpecially for the imprinting in them the Principles of Chriſtianity; and the forming of them to true Piety and Goodneſs.

There are ſeveral of theſe Schools already

already ſet up by them; particularly in the Pariſhes of *Aldgate* and *Wapping*, and St. *Margarets Weſtminſter*. And an Account will be ſhortly publiſhed of the Progreſs of their Endeavours; and their Methods and Orders for the Securing, and rightly applying what is and ſhall be given, for the promoting of ſo excellent a Deſign.

And ſurely 'tis impoſſible that any good Chriſtian, ſhould not freely contribute according to his Ability, to ſuch a Work as this. Nay all ſuch, certainly, muſt needs be very *glad* of the opportunity now given them, of being engaged in the beſt of all Charities; and of having ſuch faithful and skilful Hands at their Service, for the imploying and Management of this their Charity.

Now for your Encouragement, my worthy Brethren, to perſevere in

in doing theſe incomparable publick Services *as to the Lord*; and the more powerfully to excite us all *thus* to do all our Services, of what Nature ſoever, I ſhall lay before you a few *Conſiderations*; upon which I want time to enlarge, as I would do.

I. This doing our Services *as to the Lord*, will make *thoſe* very pleaſant and delightful, which would otherwiſe be as grievous and burthenſome. You have heard, that *thus to do*, is to Act from a principle of Love to GOD and Goodneſs: And who knows not, that *Love* is an Affection moſt highly Pleaſing? And therefore *how much* there is of it in any performance, *ſo much* of delight there muſt needs be. Now, if *Love*, whatſoever is its Object, carrys pleaſure with it; *what* Pleaſure muſt neceſſarily ariſe from *that* Love which is placed upon the Infinitely moſt Lovely Object,

ject, *GOD*, and that which is the next Lovely, *Goodneſs*; or rather, which is ſcarcely to be diſtinguiſhed from *Him*; and no otherwiſe at *moſt*, than as Rayes from the Sun, or ſtreams from their Fountain.

II. This will greatly Dignifie our Services, and therefore *our ſelves*. 'Twill make all Acts of *Juſtice* and *Charity*, Acts of *Piety*: 'Twill hallow all our *Civil* Employments, and make them *Sacred*; it will make even *drugery Divine*, ſaith our devout Poet Mr. *Herbert*. The meaneſt Servant of *Men*, by having reſpect to God in his Services, becomes *HIS* Servant, and a Fellow-Miniſter with the Glorious Angels: For, *the doing God's will on Earth, as it is done in Heaven*; for which our Bleſſed Saviour hath taught us to Pray, conſiſteth in doing it from *This* Principle; many of the Services of Angels being, for the *Matter* of

of them, ſuch as *We* are utterly uncapable of performing, in *This* ſtate at leaſt.

The Angels, conſidering the Dignity of their Nature, may be ſaid to be more meanly employed than the meaneſt of Men; as being Attendants on us poor Worms, who are mueh more their Inferiors, than the pooreſt Peaſant is the greateſt Peers: But they deſigning their Great Creators Service, in being ſerviceable to *us*, makes them to be employed Honourably, and like *themſelves*.

III. Nothing but this hearty Regard to God in our Services, will ſecure our *Conſtancy* in well-doing. The diſcouragements we ſhall therein find, upon the failing of our expectations, will ſooner or later quite diſhearten us, when we chiefly propoſe to our ſelves the poor low ends of Gain or Credit; but eſpe-

eſpecially, upon our meeting with a quite contrary Reward to what we hoped for. We ſhall be ready *then* to ſay, with thoſe profane *Jews, It is vain to Serve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept His Ordinances?*

IV. This will be conſequently a great *Support* to our Spirits, when we find our good Services not accepted by Men; or not to have their deſired ſucceſs. When we do good Offices either to the Bodies or Souls of Men, and find our ſelves unworthily requited, it goes to our Hearts: But we are ſoon eaſy again, when we can *thus* Reflect, I did theſe Services *as to the Lord, more than to Men; and God is not Unrighteous to forget my Work and Labour of Love, which I have ſhewed to His Name*; which is the Encouragement Given by the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 6. 10. and was that which enabled him, to expreſs him-

himſelf ſo *bravely* as he did. 2 *Cor.* 12. 15. *I will very gladly ſpend, and be ſpent for you, tho' the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I be loved.*

V. Nothing will ſecure to us the *Divine Aſſiſtance* in difficult Services, but being governed by this *Divine Principle.* Nor can we reaſonably have the leaſt ſuſpicion, of Gods readineſs to go along with us in thoſe Services, to which we are induced by the love of Himſelf, and a generous deſire of doing good.

VI. This is that only which can give us a well-grounded hope of *Succeſs* in any good undertaking. I know no Argument *that* Man can urge, to encline God Almighty to give a Bleſſing to his Endeavours, who is chiefly acted by little private ſelfiſh ends.

VII. The

VII The ſucceſſes thoſe have who Chiefly deſign *themſelves*, or the gratifying of their *Animal* Appetites, will prove more unhappy to them, than their greateſt diſappointments: They will help to make them ſo much the more miſerable, both here and hereafter. *Hereafter*, as they will aggravate their Puniſhment, by aggravating their Sins; and *here*, as they will more and more Encourage them in thoſe *gratifications*.

The Self-deſigner who *obtaineth* that Credit, that Profit, or Senſual Pleaſure, he hunteth after, becomes by this means more *uneaſy* than he was before: For the more any Luſt is pampered, the ſtronger it grows; and there is nothing a Man's Obſervation, Experience and Feeling, do more fully prove to him, than that *all* Luſts are very troubleſome things; and therefore no wonder that *Perturbationes* was the

the common *Philoſophical* Name for them.

There may alſo be given not a few Inſtances of *Outward* Miſchiefs, that attend on Mens proſperous Succeſſes in *Selfiſh* Deſigns: But I proceed to our *laſt* Conſideration, *viz.*

VIII. By principally deſigning the *Glory of God* in all our Services, we infinitely beſt conſult our *own* Intereſt. This was touched upon in the *Doctrinal part.* By *our own* intereſt, we are to underſtand the intereſt of our *Souls*: Our *Souls* being *our ſelves*, our Bodies *ours* not *our ſelves*; as ſome of the Philoſophers, both *Greek* and *Latine*, have obſerved. And therefore the intereſt of our Bodies, is no otherwiſe *Our* intereſt, than as it is ſubſervient to that of our Souls. The Glory of God, and our Happineſs are ſo inſeparably conjoyned, that

in promoting the *one*, we promote the *other* alſo. So that he loves *himſelf* beſt, who loves *God* moſt; and he who chiefly deſigneth His Glory, in the beſt and trueſt ſence is the moſt Selfiſh Man.

And thus are we come to the *Motive in the Text, knowing that* whatſoever good thing any Man doth, (viz. *as to the Lord, and not unto Men*) *the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord.* Or (as we have it in the parallel place) *Knowing that of the Lord you ſhall receive the Reward of the Inheritance.* And this *Reward of the Inheritance*, we find in our Text ſhall be *proportioned* to the Services we do: To our Services, not to our Succeſſes; Endeavour only being *our* Work. *This* the Prophet *Iſaiah* did [illegible]mfort himſelf withall. *Chap.* 49. [illegible]5. *Then ſaid I, I have laboured in vain; I have ſpent my Strength for nought, and in vain:*

Yet

Yet ſurely my Judgment is with the Lord, and my Work (or Reward) *is with my God. And now, ſaith the Lord, who formed me from the Womb, to be his Servant, to bring* Jacob *again unto Him; tho' Iſrael be not gathered, yet ſhall I be Glorious in the Eyes of the Lord, and my God ſhall be my Srength.*

Oh how Admirable, how Aſtoniſhing, are the Expreſſions by which this *Reward of the Inheritance* is ſet forth to us! It is called *an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reſerved in Heaven for us: A Building of God, and an Houſe not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens: A Crown of Life,* of *Righteouſneſs* and of *Glory: A Kingdom prepared from the Beginning of the World:* A *being with Chriſt,* and *beholding the Glory which the Father hath given Him: A Sitting with Him upon his Throne, even as he Sits on his Father's Throne:* A

tranſcendently tranſcendent (as the Words may be rendred) *and everlaſting weight of Glory.* By *theſe* and *more* ſuch Amazing Words, is this Reward expreſſed by our Bleſſed Saviour Himſelf, and His holy Apoſtles.

But by *our intereſt*, I underſtand likewiſe the intereſt of our Souls, with reſpect to the *Bodies* with which they ſhall be Cloathed: Since the happineſs of the other Life is ſet forth by St. *Paul*, by *having our vile Body ſo changed* by Chriſt, as to be *faſhioned like unto his Glorious Body.* And our Saviour might have a ſpecial reference to the Glorified Bodies of the Righteous, in ſaying, that *They ſhall Shine forth like the Sun, in the Kingdom of the Father.*

And by the *Exceeding great and precious promiſes* of the Goſpel, as St. *Peter* calls them, *viz.* The Promi-

Promiſes of ſo unſpeakable a Happineſs as is therein deſcribed, *What* may we not be Encouraged to *do*, for the Glorifying of our moſt Bleſſed Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier! And *What* may we not be Encouraged to *Suffer* too, for the ſame end! The *Sufferings of this preſent Life*, being *not Worthy to be Compared with the Glory, that ſhall be revealed in us*; as ſaith St. *Paul.*

And *therefore, my beloved Brethren* (to *conclude* with the Exhortation of that great Apoſtle) *be ye ſtedfaſt, immoveable, alwaies abounding in the Work of the Lord; for as much as you know, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord:* Our Labour will be ſo far from being *in vain*, that we have now heard our Reward will infinitely exceed the greateſt Services, we can ever be capable of performing: Through the Merits of

our Dear Lord and Saviour, Chriſt Jeſus; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be Aſcribed by Us and the whole World, all Honour and Glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Societies, *Which ſhould have been plac'd in the Title.*

ERRATA.

PAge 13. line 14. read *ſight.* Page 35. line 13. read *gloryed.*

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AN Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners in *London* and *Weſtminſter*, and other parts of the Kingdom; with a Perſwaſive to Perſons of all Ranks, to be zealous and diligent in promoting the Execution of the Laws againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, for the effecting a National Reformation: Publiſhed with the Approbation of theſe *Lords*, with many more.

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